

Episode 8: Return to Campus – Part 1

Nicole Thomas

Welcome to the first episode of our Fall 2021 Return To Campus series. I'm your host Nicole Thomas, Undergraduate Education Librarian here at UB. In this series, we'll share some news and updates about the University Libraries, and we'll hear from several members of the staff about what's happening across UB Libraries and get their thoughts about what it's like to be back on campus. Our first guest is a Evviva Weinraub-Lajoie, Vice Provost for University Libraries. Evviva will give us an update on some new faces you'll meet in the Libraries this fall.

Evviva Weinraub-Lajoie

Thanks for inviting me to join the podcast, Nicole. Before I introduce our new staff members, I'm happy to share the news that the Libraries will be returning to our regular schedule of hours this fall. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all new and returning students, faculty, and staff.

Nicole Thomas

Thanks, Evviva. For those who are not familiar with UB Libraries, could you give us a quick rundown of our Libraries and their locations?

Evviva Weinraub-Lajoie

Absolutely. On North Campus, you'll find Lockwood Library, Silverman Library, the Charles B. Sears Law Library, the Music Library and the University Archives and Special Collections. The Abbott Library is on South Campus and is home to our Health Sciences collection, Architecture and Planning, and the Robert L. Brown History of Medicine collection. The Medical School Library on UB's downtown campus is reserved exclusively for students enrolled in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

Nicole Thomas

That sounds great. Thanks for the snapshot of the library locations. Now, as you mentioned, there are several individuals who have recently joined the library staff. Can you tell us who they are?

Evviva Weinraub-Lajoie

I would love to. In November 2020, Rebecca Chapman joined the staff of the Charles B. Sears Law Library as our new Undergraduate Law and Indigenous Outreach Librarian. Rebecca is the Subject Librarian for UB's New Department of Indigenous Studies. This new department will focus on humanities-centered research, educational programs and community outreach aimed at addressing key issues that are central to indigenous life in our region. Before transitioning to career as a Law Librarian, Rebecca practiced law for over 15 years and previously held the position of Chief Counsel and Consultant to the Seneca Gaming Authority here in Buffalo. This past May, we welcomed Keith Mages as curator of the Robert L. Brown History of Medicine collection. This is not the first time Keith has worked in the UB Libraries. From 2011 to 2016, he worked closely with the collection's former curator, Linda Lohr, before returning to UB this past spring, Keith was a Clinical Medical Librarian at Weill Cornell Medical College and an adjunct instructor for the NYU School of Nursing. Keith is excited about his new role, and he looks forward to sharing all the collections' have to offer with the entire community. In addition to Rebecca and Keith, three other individuals have recently joined the Libraries. Natalia Estrada is our new Digital Scholarship Librarian. Natalia comes to us from the University of California at Berkeley, where she has worked since 2012 and most recently served as the Political Science and Public Policy Librarian. Natalia was also a 2018 to 2020 Association for Research Libraries Kaleidoscope fellow. Among other things, Natalia will work closely with the Digital Scholarship Studio Network and the faculty and students who use those services. Rhonda Pangrazio, our new Executive Assistant, will be helping with administrative and HR initiatives for the Library. Rhonda has worked in data processing for a regional school district and also as a Business Development Manager for a local company. In addition, we also welcome Theo Andreu as a new Acquisitions Associate. Most recently, Theo was a Collections Management Assistant at Nazareth College of Rochester.

Nicole Thomas

Oh, are there any other staffing updates?

Evviva Weinraub-Lajoie

Yeah, there are. So, two members of our current staff have new positions. Molly Maloney is now the liaison Librarian to the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Molly's office is now located in the Abbott Library on the South Campus. Amy Lake, who was previously a UB Assistant Librarian, joins Theo as one of our Acquisitions Associates in the Lockwood Library. Three of our staff are continuing in the positions as Visiting Assistant Librarians; so Maureen Grice who provides critical operational support and the Technical Services area of the University Libraries, processing and cataloging materials from our collections that have been identified as contributions for the Hathi Trust Digital Library. Joe Patton's work focuses on promoting and facilitating the adoption and use of Open Educational Resources or OER's among UB faculty, with emphasis on discovery and visibility of OER and outreach to faculty. And lastly, Jessica Hollister assists in preserving and providing access to the historic records of the University Archives-directly interacting with the community and our outside researchers. I'd like just take a moment to welcome all of our new library colleagues and wish them a successful fall semester.

Nicole Thomas

Joining us today is one of the newest members of our Library staff. Go ahead and introduce yourself.

Natalia Estrada

My name is Natalia Estrada. I am the new Digital Scholarship Librarian at Buffalo. Oh, welcome.

Nicole Thomas

Oh, welcome. It's great to have you here.

Natalia Estrada

Thank you.

Nicole Thomas

Now, tell me how you feel about starting a new position and transitioning to working on campus after this past year of pandemic shutdowns.

Natalia Estrada

Aaah, so you have all those usual feelings of moving to a new place and starting a new thing, a new job, new life. You have what I like to call new kid vibes. You're starting a new school. In this case, your new school is your new job. You're in a new city. It's completely different. You have to get used to a new routine. You're meeting all these new people. You're trying to make friends; you're trying to figure out what your role is in this new life. But then on top of that, you know, we're in a pandemic and it's like, would your life challenges to be much harder now? Let's make it a hundred. So, there's this whole situation with the pandemic where you have to be concerned not only that you're not causing harm to yourself, bringing the virus onto yourself and all the harm it can do, but also that you're not harming others and you're not exposing others to this incredibly damaging disease. Even the people who have mild cases, you're still seeing long effects of it and the fact that it's surrounded by, you know, being around other people in an enclosed space, you know, it feels like we're really pushing to come back. Understandably, you know, people have been really fatigued during Zoom lessons. We've been really restricted on what we can do in the virtual realm. But at the same time, it also feels like we've forgotten that the pandemic is still happening. I was riding the shuttle to campus and with the mask mandate and everything, there was still, you know, someone on the bus with their mask pulled down talking on the phone the entire time as if they weren't wearing a mask. And it

just I feel like I'm taking crazy pills and it just feels like, you know, we've gone over it and I don't know how it's going to look in the fall. And I need to be honest, I'm actually kind of scared.

Nicole Thomas

This is a really great perspective, and I thank you for sharing that very much.

Natalia Estrada

Thank you.

Nicole Thomas

I'd like to thank both Evviva and Natalia for speaking with me today. I hope you'll join us for the next episode in our Return To Campus series.